

Dear Companions on the Way...

This is the Christmas message from our Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Shori, and I thought you might enjoy it as I have.

Eyes to See: Finding Immanuel as immigrant, wanderer, child

In what form will you find the Christ child this year? The fact of the Incarnation in a weak and helpless babe says something significant about where we focus our search. I am convinced that it is part of our call to exercise a “preferential option” on behalf of the poor, weak, sick, and marginalized. The long arc of biblical thinking and theologizing has to do with seeing God’s care for those who have no other helper. Indeed, Jesus is understood as that helper for all who fail, by the world’s terms, to save themselves. More accurately, we understand that Jesus is that helper for all.

One of the great gifts of the way in which those in our cultural surroundings celebrate Christmas is the focus on children and on those who have few human helpers. We delight in the wonder of children as Christmas approaches, and many of us make an extra effort to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and care for the needy. The challenge is to let our seasonal “seeing” transform the way we meet our neighbors through the rest of the year, and through all the coming years. How might we begin to see that child in those around us: strangers and aliens (both Immanuel and Immigrants); wanderers (Homeless, like Mary and Joseph, for whom there was no room); widows and orphans (Social Outcasts); babe born in Bethlehem (Palestinian and Israeli alike; or the boy babies whom both Pharaoh and Herod sought to kill); divine feeder of thousands (Soup Kitchen worker); and savior of the world (Peacemaker, Bringer of Justice for All, Reconciler, Just and Gracious Lawgiver...). If God comes among us as a helpless child, then the divine presence is truly all around us. Where will you meet Jesus this Christmas?

Shalom,



Andrew

Soul Break Taizé Worship

We are changing and expanding our Taizé worship service, previously held once a month. We are moving it to Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. and will be offering it weekly. I particularly hope that it will become accessible to more people and enrich the spiritual needs of the community.

& SOUL BREAK

AT ST. MARK'S

Taizé has been a staple of our worship offerings for at least 15 years, but it has not been particularly well attended in the last few. Nevertheless, it is a rich and powerful style of worship and fits well into the increasing desire we seem to have for meditative and contemplative opportunities. The individual services have been re-crafted to make them a little shorter, include more prayers and readings from Brother Roger, (the founder of Taizé) among others, give the service more variety and provide the option of using additional resources that fit with the overall character. Changing the name to “Soul Break” gives the intent of the service right in the name and hopefully will make it more attractive than to describe it simply by an obscure location in Europe.

The service has always been characterized by beautiful music and moving to Wednesdays might make it possible for more of our singers and musicians to be a regular part of the service. This will

then make the musical element of the service even richer. Even so, the service will include significant silence and a minimum of readings (and never a sermon).

The services in the community of Taizé, France (where I have been able to visit twice) are particularly attended by young people, many of whom do not otherwise have a strong church tradition. I do sincerely hope that these services will be found and enjoyed by many outside of the family of St. Mark's. But if you've never been, or are encouraged by the changes we are making, I hope that you will make a point to come to Soul Break as well.

A Letter from Habitat For Humanity

Dear Father Andrew and the
St. Mark's Church congregation,

Thank you from all of us at Habitat for Humanity of La Plata County! Your generous support this year through monetary donations and volunteering has been crucial to the completion of the entire Casitas de Florida complex. We couldn't have done it without you and your generous, loving spirits. You have been one of the greatest resources God has given us to help with our commitment to changing lives, one house at a time, until everyone is living in affordable and decent housing in La Plata County.

Warmest Regards,
The Habitat for Humanity Family

Do You Need Boxes?

Michelle Rabouin recently moved to Durango and has several moving boxes, including wardrobes, that she would like to give away. If you are interested or if you know of someone who could use them, please call Michelle at 764-4556.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- January 9 Soul Break Taizé service moves to Wednesdays at 5:30
- January 18 Recital Series: Nan Wagner, mezzo-soprano, with Scott Hagler
- January 27 One service at 9:00, followed by annual meeting and potluck
- February 6 Ash Wednesday Blood Drive

Next on the St. Mark's Recital Series

The next recital in the St. Mark's recital series is coming up! Reserve your tickets now for mezzo-soprano **Nan Wagner**, who will be performing with Scott Hagler on Friday, January 18 at 7:00 p.m. Call the office at 247-1129 to reserve your seats.

Annual Parish Meeting and Potluck: January 27

On Sunday, January 27, we'll have our annual Parish Meeting and potluck. There will be one combined service at 9:00 a.m., followed by a potluck and the meeting. There will be a sign-up in the Parish Hall for potluck dishes and volunteers to help set up and clean up.

The business at hand for the annual meeting will include elections for new vestry members. We have included short bios for each of the vestry nominees in this newsletter. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor during the meeting. There are five vestry seats to be filled. Three are three-year (full) terms, one is a two-year term and one is a one-year term.

All who lead a ministry at St. Mark's are asked to please prepare a brief report to be

distributed to the congregation, and get it to Cheryl by Monday, January 21, preferably by e-mail: CherylW@StMarksDurango.com.

Ash Wednesday Blood Drive: February 6

The annual Ash Wednesday blood drive is fast approaching. Watch the Outreach information board in the Parish Hall for the sign-up sheets. The blood drive will begin at 11:00 a.m. and end at 2:00 p.m. on February 6. The St. Mark's Outreach Committee sponsors the blood drive three times a year, and the Ash Wednesday drive is one of the most successful. If you are not sure you can give blood, contact United Blood Services.

Adult Education

Adult Christian Education Formation will resume January 13 with a series of discussions drawn from *Christianity For the Rest of Us* by Diana Butler Bass. Copies are available in the bookstore. One need not have read the book to benefit from or contribute to the discussion. The topics relate to developing vibrant, active Christian communities in mainline traditions.

Art of Living Classes Resume Soon

Scott Hagler and Fr. Bob Seney are busy working on the next schedule of classes for the Art of Living. If you are interested in teaching a class, please pick up a class proposal form in the Parish Hall. Have an idea for a class? Give Scott a call at 247-1129, ext. 14.

Just a reminder: Yoga classes are ongoing on Thursdays at 5:15 in the Parish Hall.

Vestry Candidate Biographies

Jim Bundy

Jim has been an Episcopalian for 57 years. He writes, "I currently serve as a Lay Eucharistic Minister and as a Liaison to the acolytes. I also serve as an usher and fold bulletins for the church. I can bring new ideas to the table to increase membership in our church." Jim has also served as a St. Mark's delegate at the Colorado Diocesan Convention and is a regular volunteer for the office. He also supports the St. Mark's recital series by volunteering at each recital event. Jim enjoys music, especially old-time Gospel music. He is also a life-long signer and recently taught an Introduction to Sign Language class for St. Mark's Art of Living series.

Caroline Kinser

I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee and am a third-generation Episcopalian.

In Winston-Salem, North Carolina, I attended St. Paul's Episcopal Church. I served on various committees for the church including chair of the church women's bazaar, member of the Education Committee, head of the Food and Fellowship Committee and taught Sunday School during my years there. More recently at St. Paul's I was involved with the youth Alpha Confirmation course and was coordinator of the Adult Alpha Course.

In the community of Winston Salem my main ministry focused on the development of the only day shelter and emergency night shelter that provided case management for our clients.

Mark Mishou

I consider it an honor to be nominated for the Vestry of St. Mark's. I would like to extend that honor by serving on your Vestry. I became an Episcopalian while attending college. I am currently the Elementary Gifted and Talented Facilitator for the Montezuma Cortez School District. I believe my skills as an educator could well be used in our parish family. I also believe that my background in banking and my degree in Business Administration would benefit the parish as well. Since my arrival in Durango I have truly found my church home in St. Mark's. Currently I am a member of the choir, serve on the counting committee and have been involved in various parish activities. I look forward to more actively serving St. Mark's Church.

On a more personal level, I was born in Austin, Texas where my family still resides. After a double major in Business Administration and Kinesiology/Education, I began my teaching career in Mississippi. During my Mississippi tenure I completed a Masters Degree in Gifted Studies at Mississippi University for Women (and Smart Men too!) My interests include reading, music, hiking, rafting, mountain biking and sports (especially skiing, competitive volleyball, and racquetball).

Trisha Rickey

My name is Trisha Rickey and I just recently began serving on the vestry at St. Mark's a few months ago. I have been attending St. Mark's for about three years and have just begun my third year of serving as a Godly Play teacher. I am also on the Youth Committee at the church and have helped in other areas, such as serving at coffee hour and assisting with the Christmas pageant at St. Mark's. I am passionate about our youth programs and want to work at building these programs so that even more young families join and take part in all that St. Mark's offers.

I have two children: Benjamin, who is ten and Caleb who is six. They have enjoyed participating in various church programs over the past several years. In my professional life, I am a behavior therapist who works through a program in New Mexico that supports developmentally disabled individuals, their families, and their support staff members.

I was active in the Methodist church in my youth and as a young adult and am now loving my new life as an Episcopalian! Our church service and all of the worship opportunities our church offers become richer to me as time goes on. St. Mark's is truly special to me in terms of its ability to help others deepen their spiritual experiences, its accessibility and inclusiveness, and the broad community _____ and services that this church offers.

Priscilla Shand

As a baby, I was baptized as an Episcopalian and have been always proud to be a member of the church. Despite a brief "shopping around" period during my early 20s, my move to Durango in 1969 settled me permanently in St. Mark's Church. During the past 37 years of membership, some _____ of the ways that I have served the church are: as a Vestry member (during the '70s and '80s), teaching Sunday School for both adults and children, as a reader and a lay chalice bearer, and helping to establish a chapter of Daughters of the King at St. Mark's, (the suggestion from my little grandmother Mammy, a long-time D.O.K. member in Houston, Texas.) Each duty has brought with it a newer understanding of my relationship with God, a deeper knowledge of the Church, and a richer prayer life as I seek God's direction in dealing with the tasks associated with each situation.

Over the past 20 years, teaching full-time language arts at Escalante Middle School certainly consumed most of my time, and now that I am retired, it seems that the Vestry is again calling on me! I hope that any "maturity" and the experiences gained during the interim since my last years in the role of Vestry person will, in some way, be an asset to this church family. I believe that God calls each of us to be His heart and His hands on this earth during the time given to us here. It is our responsibility to discern what His will for us is, in these moments of our lives. I trust that each experience, each heartache and every laugh, each moment of clarity in which we see His hand at work in our lives, is His showing us where we are to be and what we are to do. I feel that perhaps now is the time for me to once again turn my attention to the Vestry of St. Mark's Church. It would be an honor and my privilege to serve in that capacity.

About the Flowers on the Altar

Do you ever wonder about the process of donating flowers for the altar? In the Parish Hall Communications Center there is a large poster-sized flower donation sign-up chart. All you have to do is sign your name by an available date on the flower chart. Please include a phone number where you can be reached if we have questions regarding what you would like the bulletin announcement to say. We will place the announcement in the bulletin on the Sunday that you donate according to a thanksgiving you have, an event you want to recognize (like a birthday or anniversary) or special people you want to remember. The altar guild has a standing order

for the Sunday altar flowers, so you don't actually have to go buy or arrange the flowers; that task is done for us by the florist. Send a check to St. Mark's for \$50 and mark the memo of your check with "Altar Flowers for..." and the date you chose. You can do this any time before the date you selected. If you have any questions about this process, please talk to Cheryl, 247-1129, or Charon Wimp.

St. Mark's Messenger Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is January 21.

Submit information for the newsletter to Tonya Wales at 259-4166 or detwales@msn.com or contact Cheryl at 247-1129 or CherylW@StMarksDurango.com.

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